

## HIV PREVENTION FAITH INITIATIVE

### WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

The faith community plays an essential role in shaping the public's knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Partnering with faith-based organizations is a key component to a comprehensive HIV prevention strategy in building awareness, mobilizing communities, and reducing HIV-associated stigma. Since 1987, CDC has made a concerted effort to bring faith and religious partners into the CDC portfolio of HIV prevention partners.

### WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

Since 1987, CDC has seen an increased interest in HIV prevention among faith-based organizations. In 1999, CDC funded five faith-based direct service programs; four capacity-building programs to provide technical assistance and training to faith-based organizations; and one divinity school to establish an HIV and substance abuse prevention curriculum and training program for faith leaders serving disproportionately affected communities. Since that time, CDC has increased funding to faith-based organizations. CDC funds 23 faith-based organizations to conduct direct HIV prevention service programs and four faith-based capacity-building providers. Secular-based programs have also been funded in the capacity development of faith-based organizations.

#### *Example of Program in Action*

The Health Education Leadership Project (HELP), a project of the Interdenominational Theological Center, in Atlanta, incorporates seven strategies aimed at developing capacity-building for faith leaders. The project includes a National Faith Leader's Training Institute, a 2-day intensive capacity-building program which trains faith leaders to address issues of HIV and substance abuse prevention affecting congregations and outreach ministries. HELP has also developed a curriculum, *Affirming A Future With Hope, HIV Substance Abuse Prevention for African-American Communities of Faith*, to teach faith leaders techniques to address theological and ethical issues and to implement a comprehensive instructional program that addresses HIV prevention through the use of faith-based narratives, spiritual principles, and individual experience.

### WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC intends to continue to provide financial assistance to those faith-based organizations that successfully compete for funding and will continue to collaborate with key leaders in the faith-based community. The primary goal is to develop a comprehensive strategy to engage faith-based and community-based organizations—particularly those serving disproportionately affected racial and ethnic communities—into HIV prevention and health promotion, stigma reduction, intervention development, and counseling and testing programs.